

FAQs: Online Worship & Copyright

Streamed services have been widely used as a result of the pandemic lockdown and will continue to play a role in making worship widely available in future. This article provides answers to some frequently asked questions.

What is streaming?

The phrase comes from the 'stream' of data which is provided from the internet. 'Streaming' involves listening to music or sound files, or watching a video, by playing it on your device instead of downloading it. Streamed content may be either pre-recorded or broadcast as it happens (also known as live streaming).

What are the most important overall priorities to consider for online worship?

Five steps:

1. Do you have the resources to provide online services?

Parishes which are not able to provide this form of worship can encourage and help parishioners to watch or listen to services provided by others. Your diocese may provide a weekly online service. You can focus on restarting public worship in church and provide additional pastoral support to those who continue to worship online.

2. Pre-recorded services vs live streaming of services

Recording gives an opportunity for speakers (with advice from others where appropriate) to check and edit content before sharing this more widely.

3. Will advertising be displayed when your service is streamed

It is strongly recommended that online videos are hosted on an advertisement-free hosting site, such as Vimeo. If you post online services directly on to Facebook or YouTube, there may be other videos (many of questionable content) sitting alongside your service. Click [here](#) to find how to avoid advertising and external content.

4. Ensure that you have the relevant copyright licences

Further guidance on copyright and licensing is available overleaf.

5. Consult and follow the Church's guidance on safeguarding and data protection

All child and adult safeguarding policies apply online as much as in everyday life. The Representative Church Body Parish Resources section on the Church of Ireland website has a [live streaming and recording checklist](#) to help parishes to comply with data protection law in this area.

What is copyright?

Copyright protects a person's creative work and prevents others from using it without their permission. There are three separate 'copyrights' that relate to music: (a) words; (b) music – tune and arrangement; and (c) recording.

The lyrics and music in a work are protected, in both the [UK](#) and the [Republic of Ireland](#), under copyright for 70 years after the death of the author/composer. The copyright period for sound and music recordings – in both jurisdictions – is also 70 years.

How can a parish organise a simple service without needing to seek copyright permission?

A parish will need to do five things to put this type of service together:

1. Arrange for a licensed clergyperson or reader to lead the service;
2. Arrange a camera/sound recorder and editor and equipment – audio content generally requires less editing time than video content;
3. Consider whether music will be included?;
4. If music is to be included, decide if it will be music performed for the parish or from a recording;
5. Check whether a copyright licence is needed.

Recorded Church Music is for use in situations in which a musician is unavailable – this includes many hymns and songs from the *Church Hymnal* and *Thanks & Praise*. The Church of Ireland owns the mechanical and performance rights for Recorded Church Music; electronic copies can be obtained from Canon Peter Thompson at donaghmore@armagh.anglican.org

For the duration of the pandemic, the Recorded Church Music Committee is giving blanket permission for the mechanical rights on its recordings to be used in streaming (this permission only covers the mechanical copyright; if the words and/or music of hymns included are still in copyright, a streaming licence is also required).

Many older hymns and settings for psalms can be used without seeking permission as they are no longer copyrighted.

How can we use a performance of music as part of an online service?

The best approach is to ask a local musician to perform music for the parish or diocese or to use the hymns from Recorded Church Music. A local musician will hold the performing rights for his/her performance of the music. For Recorded Church Music, free use is permitted by the Church, so no performance rights licence is required.

Be wary of performing any copyrighted material without a licence or 'borrowing' music from recordings. If the music used in an online service has been recorded for commercial purposes, there is a risk of being charged royalty fees or the service being taken down.

Asking a singer/instrumentalist to record a performance may create opportunities to encourage people to develop their musical ability, and for neighbouring parishes to share music to assist each other in organising services.

What safeguarding guidelines should be followed for child musicians?

Child safeguarding policies, including written consent from a parent/guardian, will apply where a musician is under 18 years of age. For any social media content which features children and young people, the following key principles – under the *Safeguarding Trust* child protection policy – must be observed:

- Parental permission should be fully informed regarding the possible long-term nature of a video being online and the platforms on which it would be available;
- There must be no detail that can identify children (which can, for example, include names on walls or birthday cards in the background);
- Any contributed content featuring a child should be sent by using a parental account, and should be produced by parents in a general room in the house;
- Where content has been produced as part of a professional role with the Church, this should be shared on a social media account operated by the relevant parish, cathedral or diocese and not by any individual, whether they are in a professional role or not.

What licences will we need?

Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI) is responsible for licensing most hymns and songs in the *Church Hymnal* and *Thanks & Praise*.

A parish or diocese must have the following licences in place before using a copyrighted hymn or song, listed with CCLI, as part of its online worship:

1. **A church copyright licence** – for projecting or printing out lyrics, and recording performances of worship for services;
2. **A streaming licence** – for streaming a service, featuring a performance of music at the request of the parish or diocese, on a social media platform (this is additional to the church copyright licence); and
3. **A music reproduction licence** – for photocopying, scanning or sharing any typeset sheet music – the music reproduction licence will be needed for any work, even if this is no longer in copyright, as typography retains its own copyright.

These licences are available for either jurisdiction on the island:

[CCLI UK – for Northern Ireland](#)

[CCLI Ireland – for the Republic of Ireland](#)

One License covers an additional range of church and choral music which is not listed with CCLI, including items from the Taizé Community and Oregon Catholic Press. Its copyright licences for the UK and Republic of Ireland are available [here](#).

Where music is not covered by CCLI or One License, permission should be sought directly from the copyright owner. Please note that, in the current circumstances, seeking this permission may take more time than would normally be the case.

Where a recording of a work is played, *mechanical copyright* will apply as a person has used his/her voice and/or an instrument to perform the music. The parish or diocese will therefore need to have permission from the musician before using a recording of their performance as part of the service.

What about music from CDs or the internet?

For music – other than Recorded Church Music – which has been recorded commercially, parishes are advised that even where they have received permission from the copyright owner, services which include this music may be removed from a social media platform.

A social media company will not know, from its own searches, which music may infringe copyright, or whether the parish or diocese has obtained copyright permission. Decisions on removal of content can be appealed but this also will take time and a successful appeal will not necessarily prevent a further removal taking place in future.

It is therefore always advisable that parishes and dioceses ask local musicians to perform and provide music for online services (or alternatively use Recorded Church Music) – and obtain the relevant copyright licences.

A parish or diocese which uses music without copyright permission will become liable for royalty fees paid to the musician through his or her recording company.

How do I place an online service on a church website?

Once an online service has been uploaded to a social media platform, it is *hosted* on that platform; it is strongly recommended that services are hosted on advertisement-free platforms.

The file can then be shared on other social media platforms and *embedded* into a church website – if the design of the website allows for this.

Hosting an online service directly on a church website is not advisable as most church websites will not have the bandwidth for this – the size of file will simply be too large.

For further queries, please contact the Church of Ireland Press Office at press@ireland.anglican.org